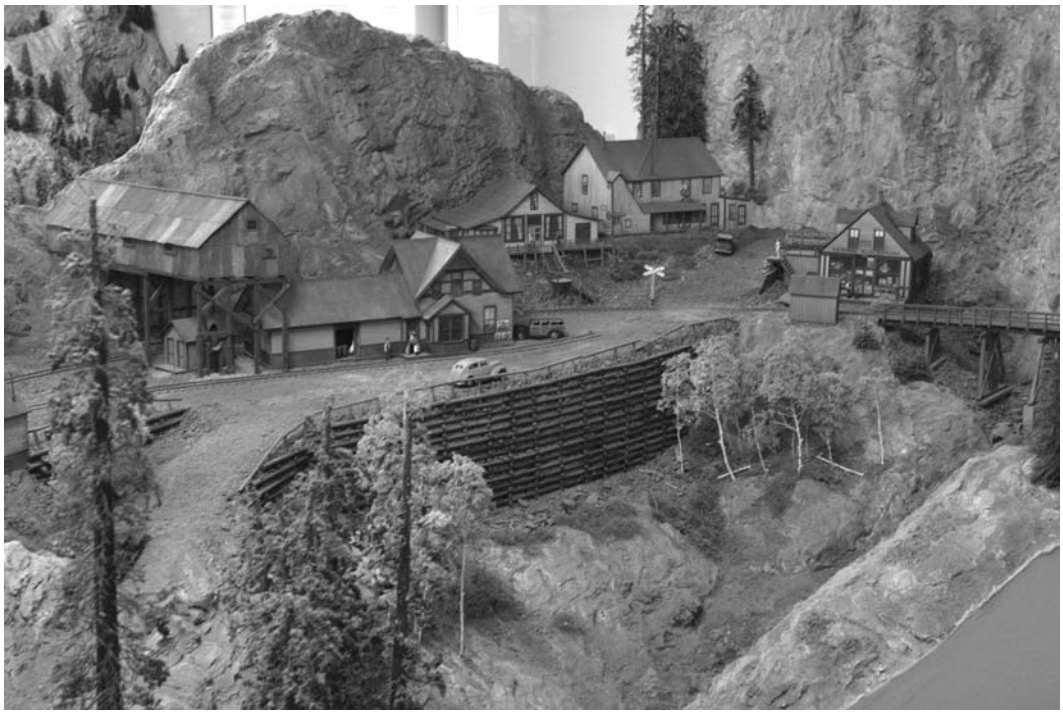
The Marker Lamp

Volume 54 **Number 1** **Winter 2008**



Craig Raymond's beautiful Sn3 RGS layout will be part of this years Super Tour in Houston

Make plans for Houston in '08 June 18-22

www.houstonncrowd.org/div8

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The Marker Lamp

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The Lone Star Region of The
National Model
Railroad Association

Volume 54, Number 1

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The editorial policy of **The Marker Lamp**, the official publication of **The Lone Star Region**, shall be to contribute, wherever possible, to the promotion, growth and understanding of the hobby of Model Railroading, within the confines of good taste and responsibility.

The Marker Lamp is published once each quarter by and for the members of **The Lone Star Region** of **The National Model Railroad Association**.

Articles appearing in **The Marker Lamp** are the opinions of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position or policies of the officers or membership of **The Lone Star Region** or **The National Model Railroad Association**.

Address all correspondence, news, photos and drawings to the editor. All material will be gladly accepted and will be used depending on the availability of space and suitability of material. None will be returned unless a stamped, self-addressed envelope is provided.

Correspondence relating to Pike Ads, Dealer Ads, Address Changes and requests for extra copies should be addressed to **Elbert Smith, 518 Granada Drive, Garland, Texas 75043-5118. (972) 681-0117**

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President's Message

by Jerry Schoenberg, MMR

Happy New Year! I hope you have marked your 2008 calendar with notes for Train Shows, Conventions, Division Meetings and Train Trip plans. Of most importance, I hope you are motivated to really enjoy our hobby of model railroading in 2008.

I thought it might be acceptable for me to state my philosophy and experience involving group memberships in our hobby at the local level and in the NMRA. While serving as your Lone Star Region President, I have received a great deal of input on this subject both from modelers and NMRA members. Although most input has been positive, there is always a tendency for complaints to get the most emphasis and from me, the most attention. I have deduced a couple of overall messages. One, some concerns are very old in origin and sometimes silly, and Two, in group activities, a great deal of what you get from them is determined by what you put into the activity. Or, you might say, it is important to be **part of the solution**.

One of the most productive sources of hobby expertise is the Division Meeting. When successful, it provides modeling help, NMRA memberships, Division income, mini conventions, and most of all—new relationships and friendships. However, without participation, these efforts will not meet expectations. Division Directors alone can not make it happen. As an example, I have watched with pleasure, the efforts made by Division 3. At first, there were only a few members that got together and covered one area of model railroading. It became obvious that to expand interests, other clinic topics, etc. were needed. The meetings now have improved attendance, and those that provided the **solutions** are enjoying the success. I received a complaint that a member would not attend again as certain topics were not covered. I hope I convinced him to be part of the **solution** by making a request and also providing his areas of expertise.

Another area of group participation is operating sessions. I often hear, "No one ever asks me to operate". Trust me, if you make the effort to show interest and perhaps offer help at larger layouts or clubs, you will get invited. At a recent three day multiple layout session in Dallas/Fort Worth (The Interchange), there were not enough operators to fill all the slots. Layout owners made these additional slots available. The area coordinators would have filled those slots if they would have known whom to contact. As a result, the successful program could have grown even more.

Quite often, one can find fellow modelers right in his/her neighborhood. If you want to know where the nearest members are in your Division, ask your LSR Secretary. He will be glad to give you the contacts. Many of us were taught that there are "givers and takers" in this life. If we become a "giver", we will not need to be a "taker" as others will be "givers" to us. If you have an area of expertise to share, give a clinic at your Division Meeting, Regional Convention, or local Train Show. In your handout, list your contact information so you will be able to help others.

It is a lot more fun to be **part of the solution** and not the problem!

View from the Spar Pole

By Chuck Lind, MMR

Hopefully everyone had a great Christmas and an un-eventful New Years. As many of you know I have a special place in my heart for the Southern Forest Heritage Museum in Long Leaf, Louisiana. I have spent the last 10 years studying, measuring and photographing almost every inch of the property. This fall at the Board meeting I was elected to the Board of Directors at the museum. My first duty will be to organize the archives so that other people in the future will be able to study the sawmill and hopefully will be able to do it easier that I did. So far I have spent several hours reading, reviewing, and scanning documents and old photos. It seems like for every question that I am able to answer I end up with four or five new questions.

After doing all the studying of the sawmill, I have also started to build a model of the sawmill in O Scale. I have just finished assembling the post and beam construction of the first level. Until I had one side completed I didn't realize how big the mill will be when completed. I hope to have it ready to take to the Narrow Gauge Convention this fall in Portland, Oregon (glad I have a big truck).

A couple of months ago I was discussing with Tracy and Duane the need to go back to Colorado and smell that coal smoke. Well of course, they both agreed, so we looked to see what was available for us to ride. With a little work we decided to take the Photographers' Winter Snow Train in February. With a call to the Durango and Sliverton ticket office, I was able to get us tickets on the train, but found out they had four tickets left in the caboose. After a quick vote we decided to purchase the tickets and added another member of the LSR to our group. Gordon Lawson will be rounding out the group. A full day of photo runbys in the snow (according to sources in the area there is a very good base of snow). So if I was a betting man, I would guess that you may see a couple of photos of Narrow Gauge steam in the snow this year in the contest room. Our trip also has plans to visit Chama and see what they are working on in the roundhouse and visit a model railroad on the way into Durango.

It is also election time, not the National one, a more important one, the Lone Star Region elections. The ballot is attached to this issue of the *Marker Lamp* so please read it over, mark your choice, and send it in. This new way of distributing the ballot was approved last year by the Board to save us the cost of having two mailings. Remember this is your organization, so please vote.

2008 LSR Convention

The **Texas Gulf Division (8)** and friends are looking forward to welcoming the Lone Star Region to Houston this summer, June 18 – 22, for the annual convention - The IRON HORSE 8! Mark it on your calendar and register early; you can expect five great days of trains and socializing. From the opening activities on Wednesday afternoon until the Iron Horse rides into the sunset on Sunday, you'll have all the railroading fun you could possibly want.

In this article and the following pages you'll find the latest information on all the activities and special events we've got planned, as well as a registration form. But be sure to keep checking the convention website, http://www.lonestarregion.com/convention.shtml, for new information on any and all aspects of the convention. It not only has all the information you're reading in this Marker Lamp, but we'll be updating it on a regular basis with more details on all the great activities we have in store for you this year!

HOTEL INFORMATION

The convention will be held at the **Holiday Inn Houston Southwest**, 11160 Southwest Freeway, Houston, TX 77031-3698. It's near the intersection of Hwy 59 South and Beltway 8 (Sam Houston Tollway).

The hotel's direct phone number is 281-530-1400, or you can call 1-800-230-8730. **We've obtained a great rate this year, just $75.00 per night**. Be sure to mention the code: "**LSR**". The cutoff date for the LSR rate is June 8, 2008.

REGISTRATION

Your registration cost this year will include the trip to Zube Park on Thursday evening for Barbeque and Train Rides. See below for more details on this fun evening. The basic registration fee will be $88 (in keeping with the theme of "8"of course!). Don't wait too long though, because on May 8 it goes up to $98, and you don't want to end up behind the "8" ball!

You'll find a complete registration form in this issue of the Marker Lamp. In addition to the basic convention registration for you and your family members, you'll find an assortment of available extra fare activities, as well as convention shirts and commemorative decals. You can also reserve your spot(s) in the operating sessions and certain clinics. Be sure to fill out the section on the back of the form (or on Page 2 if printed from the website).

GUEST SPEAKER – BRIAN MARSH

We're pleased to announce that Brian Marsh, CEO of Overland Models, will be our featured speaker at the Banquet Saturday night. Some of you heard his excellent presentation at the George Bush Library not so long ago; we're all looking forward to having Brian in Houston this year.

CLINICS

You can look forward to a wide variety of clinics on subjects such as Scenery, Electronics, Operation, Scratchbuilding, Prototype railroading, Railfanning, and maybe a few surprises! The exact schedule will be posted on the LSR website as soon as it's complete. Meanwhile, here's a list of the clinics in alphabetical order.

2008 LSR CLINIC LIST

Chris Atkins – Working with *RailOp* This clinic will explain the basics of *RailOp* and how to apply it to your railroad.

Steve Barkley –Basic DCC This clinic will show you how to get started in DCC.

Steve Barkley – Signals This clinic describes the *WinLoc* system for controlling signals.

Mike Barrett – Modeling Santa Fe and Other 6 Leg Trestles Prototype AT&SF design documentation and photographs will be presented. Techniques for modeling the trestles and using the Black Bear construction jig and Trestle Buddy will be discussed. Modeling a specific trestle near Lubbock will be described. Using the same jig to model Pennsy and Chicago & Northwestern trestles will also be presented.

Mike Barrett - Building A Four or Five Leg Trestle with Four Bents (requires advance registration & fee) This will be a 2 ½ hr. hands-on clinic. Attendees will be provided with a complete kit of pre-cut, pre-stained wood provided by Mt. Albert Scale Lumber, additional figures and stringer material. He will provide tools attendees will share. The 4 and 5 leg trestles can be completed in class. More information is available on his website: http://www.blackbearcc.com/LSRTrestleClinic.htm The fee is $33, regardless of which jig is chosen. HO scale only. The jig will be yours to keep. (If you have your own jig, the fee will be $9.) Please **sign up in advance** so Mike will know how many kits to bring. You'll find this clinic listed among the Extra Fare items on the registration

The IRON HORSE 8
Lone Star Region Convention
June 18 - 22, 2008
Registration Page 1

Name of PRIME REGISTRANT: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _ _ _ _ _ - _ _ _ _

NMRA Membership No.: _____ **NMRA Exp. Date:** ____/____/_____

Home REGION: _____ **REGION Exp. Date:** ____/____/_____

Email Address: _____

PRIME REGISTRANT to fill out only ONE of A, B, or C. **NOTE: All adult registration fees increase by $10 after May 8.**

A. Current NMRA and Region Members:
$88 PRIME REGISTRANT (name at top) name for badge: _____

B. Non-Member (includes NMRA full membership and Lone Star Region membership for one year for Prime Registrant):
$136 PRIME REGISTRANT (name at top) name for badge: _____

C. Non-Member (includes NMRA "Rail Pass" 6-month trial membership and Lone Star Region membership for Prime Registrant):
$97.95 PRIME REGISTRANT (name at top) name for badge: _____

For family members with the same address as PRIME REGISTRANT (no membership requirements):

$88 Adult family member, name for badge: _____

$88 Adult family member, name for badge: _____

$60 Minor child 11 and under (under 5 free), name for badge: _____

$60 Minor child 11 and under (under 5 free), name for badge: _____

$25 Registration surcharge (Prime registrant only)
Applies to those who do not stay at their own home nor at the Convention hotel. Fact: The cost of convention facilities is primarily subsidized by convention hotel guests. Everyone attending will share in these benefits, so we're asking that everyone pay their fair share - hotel guest or not.

Extra Fare Items: Please see Registration Form Page 2

REGISTRATION (Includes BBQ & Trains at Zube Park)

PRIME REGISTRANT (see above for applicable fee)			$ _____
After May 8 add $10		$10	$ _____
Registration Surcharge (if applicable)		$25	$ _____
Adult Family Member	Qty _____	@ $88 ea	$ _____
After May 8 add $10 each	Qty _____	@ $10 ea	$ _____
Minor Child	Qty _____	@ $60 ea	$ _____

EXTRA FARE ITEMS :
Includes Tours, Operating Session Deposits, Extra Meal Tickets, Shirts, Decals, Clinics
Please enter your selections on Registration Form Page 2

TOTAL OF EXTRA FARE ITEMS:
(As Listed on Registration Form Page 2) _____ $ _____

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED: $ _____

Please make checks payable to: Texas Gulf Division

Mail to: Robert Ashcraft, Registrar, LSR 2008 Convention, 2008 Westminister, Pearland, TX 77581

Convention hotel: Holiday Inn Houston Southwest, 11160 Southwest Freeway, Houston, TX 77031-3698
Ph. 1-800-230-8730, Local Ph. 281-530-1400, ask for LSR rates - $75 / night (cut-off date: June 8, 2008)

The IRON HORSE 8
Lone Star Region Convention

Registration Page 2

EXTRA FARE ITEMS: **(For additional details please see descriptions in Marker Lamp)**

$20 Prototype Tour #1 - Thursday 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. UTLX Tank Car Mfgr., RESCAR Car Repair Shop

$20 Prototype Tour #2 - Friday 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. UP Training Center & Loco Simulator, Metro Car Shops

$6 Non-Rail Luncheon / Tour - Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Breakfast, Luncheon and Shopping at Old Town Spring

$25 Super Layout Tour - Saturday 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Bus tour to outstanding layouts in Houston (lunch & snacks incl.)

$34 Convention Golf Shirt - AVAILABLE FOR ADVANCE ORDER ONLY!

Tan golf shirt with pocket, IRON HORSE 8 Convention logo embroidered on upper right.

$4 Commemorative Decals Ben Pearlman's "Downe & Owlte RR"

$33 Mike Barrett Trestle Clinic - Includes Jig Build a trestle

$9 Mike Barrett Trestle Clinic - Jig NOT Included Build a trestle

$25 Progressive Clinic - All Five Sessions Build your own Diorama

$10 Progressive Clinic - Per Session Build your own Diorama

EXTRA FARE ITEMS

Prototype Tour #1	Qty _____	@ $20 ea	$ _____
Prototype Tour #2	Qty _____	@ $20 ea	$ _____
Non-Rail Luncheon / Tour	Qty _____	@ $6 ea	$ _____
Super Layout Tour	Qty _____	@ $25 ea	$ _____
Operating Session Deposit - Wednesday	Qty _____	@ $10 ea	$ _____
Operating Session Deposit - Friday	Qty _____	@ $10 ea	$ _____
Extra Banquet Tickets	Qty _____	@ $37 ea	$ _____
Extra Breakfast Tickets	Qty _____	@ $15 ea	$ _____
Convention Shirts	Qty _____	@ $34 ea	$ _____
Commemorative Decals	HO ___ N___	@ $4 ea	$ _____
Mike Barrett clinic (includes jig)	Qty _____	@ $33 ea	$ _____
Mike Barrett clinic (jig NOT included)	Qty _____	@ $9 ea	$ _____
Progressive clinic series (all five sessions)	Qty _____	@ $25 ea	$ _____
Progressive clinic series (per session) Session No.: 1___ 2___ 3___ 4___ 5___	Qty _____	@ $10 ea	$ _____

TOTAL OF EXTRA FARE ITEMS:
(Enter on Registration Form - Page 1) _____ $ _____

Convention Shirts ($34)

(Advance Order Only)

Shirt sizes	Quantity Men's	Quantity Women's
S	_____	_____
M	_____	_____
L	_____	_____
XL	_____	_____
XXL	_____	_____
XXXL	_____	_____
XXXXL	_____	_____

OPERATING SESSIONS

$10 Operating Session deposit (per session), refundable at the operating session

Several of Houston's many fine layouts will host operating sessions on Wednesday and Friday evenings at 7:00 p.m.

YOU MUST INCLUDE A TEN DOLLAR ($10) DEPOSIT FOR EACH OPERATING SESSION YOU PLAN TO ATTEND. Your deposit will be refunded at the operating session. No-shows will forfeit their deposits.

PLEASE FILL IN YOUR NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION BELOW AND INDICATE WHICH EVENING(S) YOU WISH TO OPERATE. When the list of available layouts is finalized it will be posted on the convention website and sent to those who have reserved spots, so that you can indicate your preferences. A drawing will be held June 8, and you will receive your highest choice that is still available. Requests received after June 8 will receive their highest choice that is still available.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _ _ _ _ _ - _ _ _ _

Daytime Phone No.: _____ **Evening Phone No.:** _____

Choice of evenings: Wednesday _____ **Friday** _____ **Both** _____

Email (important) _____

Mail to: Robert Ashcraft, Registrar, LSR 2008 Convention, 2008 Westminister, Pearland, TX 77581

form. Or you can contact Robert Ashcraft, Registrar, crash8473@comcast.net

Barry Bogs – RTV Mold-Making and Casting in Plastic Resin Barry will explain his techniques of making successful RTV molds and then using them to make Plastic Resin castings. He will give pointers on how to cast so that there is a minimum amount of bubbles in the finished product.

Brian Block MMR – Stone Walls – Start to Finish (requires advance registration, but no fee) (approx 2 hrs.) This is a step by step Hands-On clinic in which Brian demonstrates his technique for creating stone walls. He has used this technique on several of his buildings which have been featured in the *Narrow Gauge Gazette*. Attendees will form, pour, carve and use acrylic paints to color and detail their own stone wall. Attendees are asked to bring a Hobby Knife with a #11 Blade to the clinic. This clinic is limited to 25 participants. Additional attendees are welcome to watch.

Fred Bock & Tom Crosthwait – Operations 101 A clinic for those wanting to learn how to simulate day to day operations on a model railroad. The basic movements, facing point set-outs and pick-ups, trailing point set-outs and pick-ups, run-around moves, turn and train and when to look for a passing siding will be explained. They will also teach the difference between a siding and a spur. Other necessities will also be covered. A model layout will be used for demonstrations.

Bill Dryden – Derail-free Rolling Stock Bill will present model railroading basics – tools and getting rolling stock in good operating condition.

Leslie Eaton MMR – Nano Animation for Under $10 Animation for your layout the easy way. Leslie shows off an incredible variety of electronic projects that can be created cheaply from commonly available or obtainable products.

Kennedy Gauger – Maintaining Rolling Stock During this clinic, Kennedy will present various tips and recommendations for improving the performance of rolling stock on your layout. He will show how to use the NMRA Standards Gauge and NMRA standards and recommended practices to improve rail car performance. The briefing will demonstrate how to determine and adjust proper rail car weights (RP-20.1), install reliable couplers, and adjust coupler heights to avoid unplanned uncoupling. He will also demonstrate how to reduce the friction of your rail car trucks to improve the capacity of your locomotives to pull cars and to facilitate realistic car movement during operating sessions. He will end with a demonstration on cleaning dirty wheels.

Jim Hinds – Wire Sizes for Model Railroads Jim will explain everything you need to know about wiring your railroad, including wire busses, feeders and jumpers.

Jim Hinds – Understanding and Using LEDs Jim explains what an LED is, how it works, why use LEDs, things to remember about LEDs, white LEDs, mounting LEDs, LEDs for car-lighting and much more.

Jim Hinds – Surface-Mount LEDs for Locomotives

Greg Johnson – Building & Operating an Industrial Strength Railroad The clinic will discuss prototype influences, design principles, structures, modeled industries and operations of an industrial-themed HO railroad.

Lloyd Keyser – Compressed Reproduction of Wausau WI This clinic will cover how to compress a prototype town to fit your layout taking into account the track plan, facilities, industries, operations and without loosing its character.

Chuck Lind – Building Carter Brothers Cars Carter Brothers cars were used on several western railroads around California. The West Side Lumber Co. used them as the basis for many of their cars from log cars to box cars. Chuck will be reviewing the history of the Carter Brothers and how they managed to succeed when others failed. He will also take you through the steps on how he builds the Carter Style cars for his logging railroad. The clinic will be a power point presentation with visual aids on the tools, jigs and techniques he uses.

John Lowrance – Building Backdrop Buildings for Your Layout John will show how to use modular sections to build complete backdrop buildings.

Bob Mitchell – Scenery and Rocks Without The Use of Molds, Plaster or Paint (requires advance registration, but no fee) (approx 2 hrs) This is a Hands-On clinic. Any shape of rock can be built with this method including boulders, excavation cuts, spires, arches, schist, realistic stream beds and everyday rock faces. The same method of coloring these rocks also adds life and depth to flat scenery and ballasted track. All tools and materials will be provided. This clinic is limited to 25 participants. Additional attendees are welcome to watch.

Bob Mitchell – Hand-Laying Track Made Easy Always thought hand-laying track was too much work?...well think again. This method uses real wooden ties and is done without the use of spikes, track templates, or gauges. This is also a sure fire way to build wooden trestles in place.

Tom Palmer – MKT Passenger Operations – Post War – Early 1950s This clinic will describe MKT operations, equipment, special moves and military moves. It will provide information for adding variety to anyone passenger operation.

Duane Richardson – Weathering Duane will the cover various techniques necessary for weathering, be it on rolling stock, structures, or other and using various mediums such as inks, chalks, pastels, dirt or other.

PROTOTYPE TOURS

Tour No. 1 - Thursday

Union Tank Sheldon (tank car manufacturing) The UTLX manufacturing plant in Sheldon TX has 4 production lines capable of producing 40-50 tank cars per week. They typically produce general purpose cars and small 25,000 gal pressure cars. Starting in May they expect to start a run of 33,500 gal pressure cars. We will get to see one of the 2 cold steel head presses used by UTLX capable of pressing steel plate almost 1 inch thick into a head for a tank car. A safety briefing will begin the tour. Hardhats, safety glasses

will be provided. Long pants and hard shoes are required. Steel toe shoes are recommended – if you have them, bring them.

Rescar Channelview (railcar repair)

The RESCAR repair center in Channelview is focused primarily on the repair of rail tank cars, but, from time to time, hopper cars are brought in for repair as well. Inside the facility they have the capability to store about 400 cars at once. There are areas for repair - both light and heavy, interior linings, exterior paint as well as an area set aside for the FRA mandated tank car qualification (similar to the annual safety inspection required on your auto). They also have a valve shop with in-the-ground testing pods. Soon to be complete is a new repair building and a state-of-the-art tank car cleaning rack. Hardhats and safety glasses will be provided at the safety briefing. Long pants and hard closed toe shoes are required. Steel Toe shoes are recommended.

Tour No. 2 - Friday

Union Pacific Training center at Lloyd yard (locomotive simulator)

Metro Rail Barn (Metro railcar maintenance)

LAYOUT TOURS (Drive-yourself)

As always, one of the top attractions in the Houston area is our wide selection of outstanding home railroads. We'll have two days of drive yourself tours to layouts from N scale to G, narrow gauge, standard gauge, large, small, desert, mountain, outdoor… well, you name it – you'll see it!

SUPER LAYOUT TOUR

A charter bus tour to some of the finest layouts in the Houston area. Among the eight layouts on the tour will be Barry Bogs' Gn3 "Colorado & Western," Craig Brantley's O/On3 "D&RGW Spring Division," Craig Raymond's Rio Grande Southern style Sn3 layout, the HO scale "Great Great Northern" of Don Bozman, Gil Freitag's "Stony Creek & Western," plus others yet to be determined. Check the following pages for photos of some of the layouts.

Our charter bus will leave the hotel at

7:30 a.m. Saturday morning and return between 5:00 and 5:30 p.m. that evening – in time to get ready for the Social Hour and Banquet. We'll have free soft drinks and doughnuts on the bus, and a box lunch is included. On the longer portions of the trip we'll be showing railroad and / or modeling clinic videos on the closed circuit TV system.

OPERATING SESSIONS

One of the highlights of the convention will be the Operating Sessions, which will take place on Wednesday and Friday evenings. The sessions will begin at 7:00pm each night, and you should make arrangements for your own transportation.

To register for operating sessions, be sure to fill out the section at the bottom of Page 2 of the registration form and indicate your choice of Wednesday, Friday or both. As soon as the list of available layouts is complete it will be posted on the website and sent to those who've reserved slots so that you can indicate your preferences. A drawing will be held on May 30 and you'll receive your highest choice that's still available. Requests received after June 8 will get their highest choice from whatever is left.

A refundable $10 deposit is required per session to encourage you to attend. The layout owner will refund your deposit during the operating session. No-shows will forfeit their deposit. No cancellations will be honored within 5 days of operation.

BARBEQUE & TRAINS AT ZUBE PARK

How about an evening of BBQ, socializing and riding behind an assortment of steam and diesel engines? On Thursday June 19th all LSR convention attendees are invited to the "HOUSTON AREA LIVE STEAMERS" railroad at Zube Park for a catered barbeque cookout. At 5 o'clock the trains will be ready to ride on our fabulous 9000 foot track. In addition, we'll be giving

tours on our 2500 foot expansion for Phase 4. Dinner is served from 6:00 pm and until 7:30, but the trains will continue to run until 9pm.

All this fun & food is included in your registration fee. You'll get a great catered meal and all the train riding you, your spouse and your kids can handle, plus tours of the car and engine barns and other facilities.

HALS was formed in 1991 with the idea to build a modest 7½ gauge, 1/8 scale railroad. We've far exceeded our expectations. We currently have 9000 feet of track down, with a 2500 foot expansion in Phase 4. We have both live steam and diesel motive power as well as numerous pieces of rolling stock and riding cars.

In addition, HALS has a 250' long elevated Gauge One Live Steam Railroad the likes of which you've never seen before, so you sure don't want to miss that.

Come for the food and the fun! It's better than dinner and a movie! Bring lawn chairs or blankets if you have them available.

NON-RAIL ACTIVITIES

On Wednesday evening we'll be having a social get-together and a preview of upcoming activities, including samples of all the clinics that will be presented throughout the convention. Sign-up sheets will be available so that you can pick and choose any or all the events you wish to attend. For more details on the clinics please see Virginia Freitag's article in the "Petticoat Junction" column in this issue.

Friday will be a shopping/luncheon trip, but the first stop will be at Byron and Carolyn Spampinato's home; you're all invited for a continental breakfast – quiche, fruit, muffins, drinks, etc! Then it's on to **Old Town Spring** with its vast array of

Welcome to
OLD TOWN SPRING
Historic 1900's Railroad Town
Come and enjoy the history, shopping and charm of Old Town Spring!

shops – antiques, collectibles, souvenirs, snack and specialty food shops, all topped off with a luncheon at Puffabelly's, a unique restaurant in housed an old train station.

And anytime you find yourself needing a place to just go relax and unwind, we've got a beautiful parlor awaiting you up on the sixth floor, where you can "sit deep and rest easy!"

A **Christian Bible Study** will be held after breakfast on Sunday morning for anyone wishing to attend.

CONTESTS

Chuck Lind has a new and improved contest for 2008; you'll definitely want to participate in this one. Some of the categories and rules have changed slightly, and some really unique and fun special contests have been added, so for all the details be sure to read Chuck's article in this issue.

By the way, the website also has downloadable Contest Entry Forms for your convenience.

DISPLAY ROOM

If you're in the mood to just wander around and see what's happening, be sure to check out all the goings-on in the Display Room. Try your hand at the Switching Contest, peruse Jim Long's LSR Historical Display, admire the operating layouts, and enjoy all the other things that haven't even been thought of yet! The Display Room is also where you'll find the Progressive Clinic. Come by and watch or sign up and join in. Details are just below.

PROGRESSIVE CLINIC – HANDS-ON!

You'll certainly want to peek over the shoulders of the folks working on their dioramas. Tracy Mitchell, MMR and his team of outstanding modelers will be leading a group through of all the skills and techniques needed to create a top-quality diorama right before your eyes! Sign up and join the fun in this hands-on series of clinics! Better hurry though; it's *limited to the first sixteen people.*

How to build a HO Diorama 1301

The clinic will be a total of 4 sessions and one optional session. The fare will be $25 for all five sessions or $10 for each individual session. It will be limited to 16 participants. On-lookers will be allowed and encouraged.

When you sign up for all 5 sessions, here's what you'll receive: one 12 x18 inch piece of blue foam one inch thick for the base, track and roadbed, ground cover materials including dirt, sand, ground foam, weeds, etc., tree making supplies including trunks and foliage material, plastic structures, detail parts including signs, decals, etc., two freight cars and all the necessary supplies (glues, solvents, paint, and tools) needed to complete the diorama.

The concept of the clinic is: You'll start with a 12 x18 inch piece of 1 inch blue foam base, and when done you'll have a complete display. You will learn how to plan and lay out a display, some track laying, tree making, scenery techniques including blending scenery, and how to upgrade a structure. You will also learn how to bring it all together to create your own masterpiece. The style of the diorama is up to each individual; it can be industrial, rural, rolling hills, or an urban setting. You make it what you want it to be. Some tools will be supplied, but attendees are advised to bring their own X-Acto knives and any other favorite modeling tools.

MMR Tracy Mitchell and his expert staff will be conducting all the sessions. Guest Clinicians will also be around to help out as they are needed. This will be a chance to learn from the best modelers that the LSR has to offer.

Session #1 – Wednesday night 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm. This session is devoted to planning and beginning construction of your diorama and learning to make trees. You will learn how to place your buildings, roads, trackwork, details, and some scenery for the most dramatic effect. You will also learn basic track work, grade crossings, culverts, shaping scenery, and tree making.

Session #2 – Thursday Morning 8:00 am – 12:00 noon. This session will be primarily about scenery; applying ground cover and track ballast, creating cuts and fills, making dirt roads, and anything else pertaining to scenery will all be taught during this session.

Session #3 – Friday Morning 8:00 am -12:00 noon. This one's all about upgrading and detailing structures. You'll pick out a pre-built building from the group of styrene structures supplied. You will then be shown how to enhance the structure you picked out. Topics include window dressings, signs, roof upgrades, brick mortar, distressing wood siding, and adding details to make a structure look more realistic. This will NOT be a "how to build a model kit" clinic, but rather how to enhance an existing building.

Session #4 – Friday Night 7:00 pm – 10:00 pm. In this final session you will learn how to blend it all together. Details will be added to your scene making it more lifelike. The topics will include adding clutter, vehicles, figures, and other details to bring your diorama to life. When finished you will get to take the diorama home with you to display on a shelf, or even incorporate it into your layout or module.
Session #5 (Optional but still included in $25 fare) – Saturday morning 8:00 am -12:00 noon. Decaling and weathering freight cars. In this optional setting you will be given a painted but unlettered freight car and will learn how to apply decals. Emphasis will be on showing how to hide decal film. As an added bonus you'll be given a lettered, but un-weathered, freight car and will be taught how to weather it appropriately without the use of an airbrush. In the end you'll walk away with two freight cars, one lettered and one weathered.

SILENT AUCTION & RULES

Last but certainly not least, at the end of the hall you'll find the Silent Auction and treasures galore! The auction rules will be posted in the room.

CONVENTION SCHEDULE

The detailed Convention Schedule is still being developed, but the tentative schedule of activities is as follows (subject to change):
Wednesday evening: Set-up, Registration, Clinics, Operating Sessions, Non-Rail preview/social.
Thursday: Registration, Contest entry, Silent auction entry, Clinics (rail and non-rail), Layout tours.
Thursday evening: BBQ Picnic & Trains at Zube (included in registration!).
Friday: Registration, Contest entry, Silent auction entry & bidding, Clinics (rail), Prototype tour #2, Non-rail luncheon & Old Town Spring tour.
Friday evening: Registration, Silent auction ends, Contest judging, Clinics (rail & non-rail), Operating sessions.
Saturday: Super Layout Tour, Drive-yourself layout tours, Clinics (rail & non-rail), Contest viewing, Silent auction settle-up/pickup.
Saturday evening: Social Hour, Banquet, Games, Contest viewing & pickup.
Sunday morning: Breakfast / LSR Annual Meeting, Bible Study, LSR Board Meeting.
See you in Houston in '08!
Loren Neufeld, MMR
Convention Chairman - **the IRON HORSE** 8

Special Contest for Houston

Your slightly demented (depending on who you ask) Contest Chairman has come up with something to follow last year's "Outhouse" contest.

This year's contest will be to build whatever you want. The catch is, it must fit on a peanut butter jar lid (no bigger than 3 1/2"). You can build whatever you want, in any scale you want, but it must fit on the lid and not hang off. We will have a cylinder we will slide over the model to make sure it conforms to the rules. For those of us in the larger scales, this will be a real challenge. For others like Tom Browning (Z Scale), you can almost build a layout. (Hint Tom, I didn't see a Z Scale outhouse last year so I am expecting something this year to test the judges' eyes.)

Those are the basic rules and the entries will be judged with the rest of the models using the NMRA scores and LSR Rules. It can be in any category, so please let us know when you are entering that it is also in the "Houston Special" contest.

Like last year, special awards will be given out to the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners based on the highest scoring models from all categories. You have plenty of time for planning and building, so lets fill the contest room again. If you have question please give me a call 979-696-8862 or email me at crlind@tamu.edu.
See you in Houston '08.

Company Store

	HO		N-Scale
Casey Lines	OUT		$ 5.00
Texas & African	$5.00		OUT
Waco Austin & Bryan	$5.00		$ 5.00
Anniversary Car 1951	OUT	per set	$35.00
Anniversary Cars 2001	OUT	per set	$35.00
ITC - Bob Clarke	$10.00	per set	$35.00
Quin Lines	$12.00		

Check your layout and be sure you have one of each *special run* Region car. If not we can take care of the shortage post haste.

Other items available

Cloth Region Patches	$5.00 each
Auto/Window Region Decal	$ .50
N Scale Nevadun Decals	$2.00 per sheet
HO&N Scale Daw Cha Southern Decals	$3.00 per sheet

Shipping
Please add $5.00 for up to 3 cars and add $1.00 for patches and decals

Eunice Linda, Dispatcher
3028 Cumberland
Waco, TX 76707-1219
254-754-5535
E-mail: jlinda@hot.rr.com

Up The Track

By Bill Dryden

Here is the list of the upcoming LSR or national railroad events of which I am aware. I provide all the information YOU send me or I can glean from other publications for these events. Additional information may be available through the NMRA *Scale Rails* and/or various trade magazines. Please forward any and all information about upcoming events or activities in your area, club, etc., to me via email at bdr149@airmail.net. Also, note that all show times and dates are at the discretion of the sponsoring organization and are subject to change. **The upcoming events:**

LSR Convention:

Lone Star Region 57th Annual Convention

Houston, TX

The Lone Star Region NMRA 57th Annual Convention will be held at the Holiday Inn Houston Southwest beginning Wednesday, June 18th and continuing through Sunday morning, June 22nd. The Holiday Inn is located at 11160 Southwest Freeway, Houston, TX 77031; (Hwy 59 S at Beltway 8); (281) 530-1400; rooms are $75. Other details are being worked out and will be added as the details become more firm — Check the LSR website. **Come all!! PARTICIPATE!!!**

Recurring events and meetings:

DFW Area Lionel Modular Group Meeting

Plano, TX

The DFW Lionel Modular Group meets the second Monday of the month at 6:45 PM in the Gladys Harrington Library; 1501 East 18th St.; Plano, TX. For more information call (972) 422-4330.

LSR Division 3 - Northeast Texas Division - Monthly Meeting

Garland, TX

Nicholson Memorial Library, 625 Austin St., Garland, TX Third Saturday of each month. For more information contact Duane Richardson (duane@purgatoryanddevilriver.com) or check the Division 3 Page on the LSR website

Houston Area Live Steamers

Hockley, TX

Come enjoy free train rides on our 7,500 feet of 7½-inch gauge track. Public run days are the 3rd Saturday of the month March thru November. US Hwy 290 and Roberts Road; Times are 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM. We can always open special days for Model Railroaders. For more info go to www.hals.org or contact Peter Bryan at peterb@ppdq.net

North Texas Council of Railroad Clubs Meeting

Irving, TX

The North Texas Council of Railroad Clubs (NTC) meets the third Tuesday of the month. Visit the NTC website www.dfwtrainshows.com for more information about the NTC, its meeting site or its member clubs. All model railroaders welcome.

Events and Shows:

February

5th **North Texas Chapter National Railway Historical Society Meeting**
Tue. 7:30 PM "Dallas and North Texas Railroads in the 60's and 70s" Tues. 7:30 PM
Sokol Dallas Center; 7448 Greenville Ave.; Dallas

16th **Greater Houston Train Show** (The San Jacinto Model Railroad Club, Inc.)
Sat. 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM
Adults $6, Children 12 - 18 $1, Children Under 12 Free
Stafford Centre, 10505 Cash Road (at Murphy Road), Stafford, TX Contact: Carlos Garcia cagarcia@rice.edu or Don Bozman (281) 481-0352 don_bozman@att.net

23rd – 24th **Longview Model Train Show** (Junction and East Texas Train Society) Sat. 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Sun. 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Adults $6, Children 12 and Under Free
Longview Exhibit Building, Longview Fairgrounds, off Hwy 31 on Jaycee Drive
Contact: Homer Fleischer. P.O. Box 6704, Longview TX 75608 (903) 753-9512

March

1st - 2nd **The Great Train Expo**
Sat. and Sun. 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Adults: $7.00, Kids Under 12: FREE
Fort Worth Convention Center, Fort Worth, TX
Contact: (630) 383-2017 Fax (630) 566-0400
media@greattrainexpo.com

April

26th **Model Railroad Jamboree 2008** (New Braunfels Railroad Museum)
Sat. 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM
Adults $6, Teens (13 - 17) $2, Children (5 - 12) $1
New Braunfels Civic Center, 380 S. Seguin St., New Braunfels, TX
Contact: Jerry Garteiser NMRA # 039977
jerryg@gvtc.com

June

18th – 22nd **Lone Star Region Annual Convention**, Houston, TX (Other details above, below, well *EVERYWHERE* in this issue <grin>

July

13th – 19th **NMRA Convention**, "The Anaheim Special"
Contact: http://as2008.org and see information in ***Scale Rails***

Future Events (More Information to follow as available)

October

11th – 12th **LMRA 26th Model Train Show**, Fort Worth

8th – 12th **Circus Model Builders and Carnival Historical & Model Builders National Gathering** at LMRA, Fort Worth

December

13th – 14th **NTC Fort Worth Train Show**, Fort Worth Convention Center

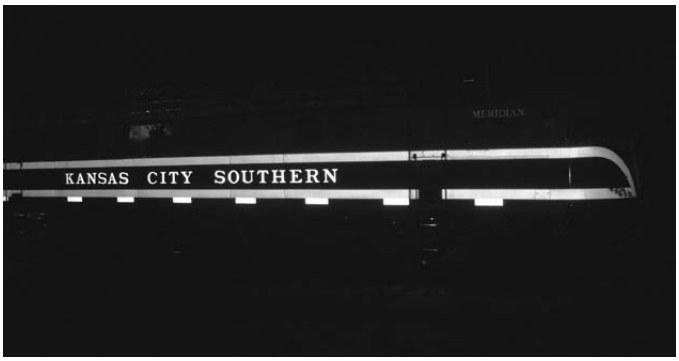
January 2009

17th – 18th **NTC Dallas Area Train Show**, Plano Center

Elf Stories '07

Don "The Elf" Kimmell

The Elf is back! Yes, another Christmas Season on Kansas City Sothern's Holiday Express!! 2007 Edition.



We thought it would be a bit easier this year, yeah, right…Santa, with the willing assistance of the Head Elf, decided that this year's theme would be….Santa!! Interesting. The Man-In-Red only wanted one car changed, he felt the "Elves Workshop"-the green caboose-should be re-themed—to him. So we demolished the interior, which really did not take too long, it never does when you take things apart—only problem was where to put things, needed a whole lot of boxes for storage, the end result was a empty caboose, somewhat messy, but ready for paint and decorations. We had this accomplished by May, thinking we would have plenty of time to redecorate…but as everyone knows; things don't always go according to plan!!!

The Reindeer Stable Car-(model train layout) was in good shape, just the usual cleaning and fine tuning—of course there were a few more things to add…100+ people, a few (50) more lights and who can't add a couple more cars and trucks!! Oh, don't forget the "new" ice skating ring, the tug-of-war, used car lot, produce stand….and a few more things……are we having fun yet? Oh, Santa would like a "small" HO layout in the center of the Green caboose…it should look like the "North Pole"….You know, all in white!!! Have you ever tried to build an only white layout??? This will be built under the cupola, on the steel floor, and have small ramps over it, so the viewing public will "walk over" it, and it must be in white!!! White on white on white on white…….Well as everyone knows the North Pole is a bit flat, somewhat featureless, really boring looking place, not real interesting. Well, I managed to convince the Head Elf and a few others that maybe a "few" trees—Christmas variety—a some dwellings-you know where the elves make toys, Santa lives, and so on, would be a good idea. Something to break-up the "whiteness". As they say, the plans of mice and men…..

This had all been planned by the end of May, so we had a couple of months to get things done…..yeah. It seems that the "real" railroad added a couple more cars to their Business Train, and the refurbishing of these cars would take preference over the Holiday Express, just a couple of weeks or so….well, we did our work on the "big" layout, got everything wired up, glued down, re-snowed, re-dirted, planted, landscaped and generally cleaned up. By September, the pressure was starting to build…still no green Caboose. They were just going to paint the insides white, you know, make it "feel" cold. October, not quite yet, have to take a few "bigwigs" on a few trips…."…next week, or…." Then, first week of November, viola!! "WE HAVE IT READY! For YOU!!!" Needless to say a madhouse did occure, we had elves decorating the inside with so many versions of Santa's that it is unbelievable, hanging lights, hanging decorations, doing some murals on the walls and they want me to build a 11' x15' North Pole, on the floor! We did finish it, barely in time, like two nights before the first show. Everything, including power, track, ballast, trees, buildings and a few residents were all done by Thanksgiving Eve. Of course, there were a few bags to stuff, like 1000+.

This year the planned trip would start on Friday, with a special KCS Employees' Night. Shouldn't be too bad, a couple of hundred or so knock it out in no time at all….have we heard that one before? Of course the temperature did drop a bit, like 25 or so, with a north wind, just to get you in the mood. I finally convinced my wife to join me on the "front lines" this year, "...yes dear, it shouldn't be more then 90 minutes to 2 hours…" Wrong, we ended up having over 1200 folks, over 3 and a half hours…to say this elf was a bit wrong is an understatement, in fact I promised my better half, I would feed her right after we got done…like 9pm….. I guess I should know by now, things don't always go as planned when trains are involved.

The following night we would be on the riverfront, downtown Shreveport, Rockets Over The Red…Well, the temperature continued to drop, then the rain moved in…to say it was wet is an understatement…have you ever seen 12 elves dressed in orange and yellow ponchos? Quite a sight. Needless to say the attendance was a bit down, but the Man-in-Red did his usual great job, and everything worked. Relief!!! After we finished that night's show, we would be leaving for Leesville, LA, for the next evening's show. Oh, yeah, another small change this year, it seems the "real" railroad, will be running a special business train down to Mexico, and they get "first choice" on the cars they take…but …"...we will take care of you…" They did, we had a first, a Dome Car, the "Monterrey", also the "Port Arthur" a parlor car, with a big screen TV, with the usual attachments, but alas, not satellite hook-up, oh the sacrifices we have to make! We would also get the "new" generator car, the "Tampico", with a brand new generator to be our "HEP" car. WOW!

After a cold and rainy night on the river front, a warm meal

and warm bed sure sounded good, but not to be…it seems there is a "small" problem with our "brand new, state-of-art" generator, it would not handle the LOAD!, but not too worry, we have the "factory techs" on the way to solve all of our problems….well, 24 hours later, they did, but for the first time in the history of the Holiday Express, we had to cancel the show, sorry Leesville, but the train is broke. On to Port Arthur. We woke up Monday morning, turning on the loop, you know, the one that they used to turn the "Crow" on, in beautiful, sunny, breezy and cold Port Arthur. After breakfast, on to the bag stuffing, we should have an average crowd, 1200 or so….as usual, that was not figuring on the "live" TV broadcast, I think we ended up with over 2300, a bit of an increase….Oh, one other twist, we had a number of "newbie's"- first time Elves, so this is what they call "on the job training". But we did have a warm powered home to come back to…a 9' diameter steel tube. We got to spend the night in the yards there in Port Arthur…did you ever hear a couple of loaded tank cars couple 5 feet outside you bedroom window, it is an experience you will not forget.!!

On to Beaumont, well it seems that the folks that couldn't make it the night before, seeing us on the tube, decided to come on down to the yards in Beaumont and visit us. The line that night started to form at 3:15pm, and we were due to start at 4pm, this is going to be a long night! We started the show a bit early, like 3:30pm, and by 4:30 the line was out of sight around the yard office, thru the parking lot, along the chain link fence, and then some more….and for the longest time it didn't seem to get any shorter, in fact we ended up with a couple of Beaumont's finest helping keep things under control, all this with a couple of newbie's. Another long night, it was about 9:15, when the last child told the "Man-in-Red" what they wanted, Dora and Transformers were very big this year. On to DeQuincy.

Another night on the road, the ride was ok, rails smooth, bed warm, and food good. This year I had a bedroom in the Vera Cruz, a 6/4 sleeper, reasonably new, in very good shape. My bedroom was a "B" type, in other words the bed was parallel to the rails, just under the window, so you could open the shade, after turning off all light, at night to see what is to be seen….a whole lot of Piney woods. The reason you turn off all the lights at night or draw the shades is a lit window does make a "fun" target. Get my drift?

DeQuincy is a neat place, the station is a wonderful museum, with a ton of railroad history, set inside a "Y". And I can not say enough about the people, really great folks, in fact, the Mayor told us if we have ANY problems, just call him. A get-out-jail-free card! This evening's crowd started to form at 3:30pm, so we started early again, got to be flexible to be an elf! By 8:30pm we had boarded over 2700, with the help of the Mayor, as usual I was the "up" elf, and His Honor was my able assistant, doing some campaigning along the way. It was fun watching a pro at work; every night on the Holiday Express is an education!! What I forgot to mention, is that every morning, after breakfast, if we are "blue flagged", we would be stuffing bags, we never seemed to have enough, so just bag some more, and more, and more….a never ending morning ritual, believe it or not, you do tend to get used to it, sort of, yeah, right. Next stop, DeRidder.

Another over night transit, I do not remember anything after our evening meal, just off to bed. Next morning, I hear a truck outside my window, open the shade, and there is a grain truck unloading into a pit with an auger turning away, moving this "red" stuff into a sheet metal building. You do end up on some "interesting" siding while riding the train. With a cup of coffee in hand, I wandered back to the Port Arthur's platform to see what I could see. I asked the trucker what he was unloading –"potash". Oh, so what do you do with potash, well, fertilizer is the end result. It seems we are "parked" in the middle of a fertilizer plant! Like I said, interesting! Oh well, off to breakfast, and stuff a few bags, oh, by the way, we are doing something special today, we will have 600 +, 4,5 and 6 year olds having a "special" tour, like at noon, so do a few extra bags……also, this was our largest crowd last year, so get ready. The location was right on the town triangle, not a square, right in front of City Hall, across the "main" from the old station, by a very nice city park. As we were wandering across the park, on our way back to get ready, our "brand new, state-of-the-art" generator kind of of "coughed", kept running, but was this a harbinger of things to come? Oh well, I am just an elf, not my worry. Yeah, right. That evening the whole town of DeRidder seemed to turn out, we had over 3400. Finished, supper, maybe a DVD on our big screen, then bed. I would be getting off the next morning, when we went thru Shreveport. At supper-the usual 9:30pm meal-our head elf announced we had a "small" generator problem, it seems that the oil filter, with a chip in it, and the fuel filter, which also had a chip—you know how all these newfangled gadgets are-are clogged, telling the "big" chip to change them, well, the generator is so new, that the filters are not out in the system yet, but the factory tech from Little Rock will meet us in the morning in Bossier City to solve the problem. So, we will be using the individual car generators. OK, well it seems that only three cars have generators, and the Vera Cruz is not one of them, so "…here is a flashlight, and we will see you in the morning…" Another adventure in railroading!! Off to bed, backing by the light of a flashlight, no heat, no running water but I will have a hot, long shower in the morning-at home! I survived, and enjoyed the whole trip. I will do it again!

This year's Holiday Express visited 28 cities in 30 days. We had over 44,000 boardings, bring the Man-in-Red and Christmas Cheer to many souls. We are already planning next year's improvements and we will visit a few new places. Hope to see you soon.

Mastering Modeling Birch Bark Canoe

By Terry Mitchell MMR with no help from big brother Tracy

A friend of mine here in Canada has a unique project started. He is building a Birch bark canoe. You might be asking, what does this have to do with Model Railroading? Well it involves many of the same skills you might use to scratch build a prize-winning model. Let's look at the Birch bark canoe project and see how we can compare it to our Model Railroading.

My friend researched canoes. He started by trying to find an example of an existing Birch bark canoe. He was not successful finding a canoe to observe first hand. His next avenue for researching was in the library and the Internet. Here he was successful in finding examples for Birch bark canoes. He was able to find how the First Nations Peoples constructed their's. (An aside here, unlike Native Americans in the USA, here in Canada they are referred to as First Nations or sometimes Aboriginals.)

His research did not provide a suitable prototype canoe to follow. His problem is he is a big man (6'-4" and over 280 lbs of lean mean muscle machine, a blown knee kept him out of the NHL, and all the prototypes were too small. It was then he decided to free-lance his canoe. He prepared his own drawing, following the lines from a large modern fiberglass canoe. Next, he acquired materials to construct his canoe. His materials were obviously bark from a Birch tree for the skin. For the framework, he made his own cedar strips from cedar trees. He split the trees into strips with a hatchet. To lash the framework together, he used roots from a spruce tree. And finally to affix the skin to the framework, he used Pine tar, or pitch.

He hasn't yet completed his canoe. He is about halfway through the framework. He said there are lots of long strips to split apart. So I can't tell you whether it floats, or if he is all wet. However, I can tell you how his building the canoe is very similar to building a model.

First, research the prototype. If you model the modern day, your research is made quite a bit easier. If the locale you are modeling is near where you live, that makes it easier. If you model modern, but across the country, then a vacation is in order. If you want to model something from the past, then you have to go to the library, either your personal library, or a well stocked train store. Usually the public library is not much help for researching railroad related items. However, if you are researching specific details, then you might just luck out at the public library.

For one project, Tracy and I were modeling Houston in 1949. We went to the Texas room of the main library in downtown Houston. There, we found where an advertising agency had donated its collection of photographs. For many years, the advertising agency had photographed the same billboard downtown. To our benefit, they didn't just take a close-up picture of the billboard. They captured most of one of the main corners in downtown. As a result, we were able to tell how long, or short, skirts were on a given date. We could tell when mailboxes went from likely dark green to red and blue. We could reasonably guess what colour car license plates were at what time. We could tell when automobiles shed the drab colours for brighter shades. This kind of information would apply to most urban settings and is a valuable asset to a modeler.

The Internet is another great source of information. Nearly everything you might want to know, and many you don't want to know, can be found on the Internet. However, there is usually too much information and it can be difficult to glean out what you really need. Perseverance and a judicious use of Google can help your research yield useful information.

Another similarity between my friend's canoe and our models is sometimes we need to adapt the model to fit our needs. Unlike his canoe where he had to expand the canoe, we usually have to compress the size of our models. But also, the models we usually want to build are too plain. We have to add details to make them look more realistic. Sounds kinda' funny doesn't it. But most times nail holes don't show on a real building, so we have to add them ourselves. Sometimes we change the roofline or add a window. Most of the time we add details to increase the "Interestingness" of the model.

My friend's canoe is about as close as he could get to one made hundreds of years ago. He did as much research as he could, and he followed authentic construction methods of the era modeled. Not so different from what we do is it?

Back to Modeling Now

LADIES ONLY!
Petticoat Junction

2008 LSR Convention Non-Rail Activities: There will be a full slate of activities to keep you busy.

At present we have the following "make and take" Non-Rail Clinics scheduled:

Cookies in a Jar *by Julia Davis*
Painting Wooden Santas *by Laurie Lind*
Wire Angels *by Norma Brignac*
Greeting Cards *by Diane Wilson*
Go with Everything Jewelry *by Patti Bullard*
Flower Arrangments for your Home *by Brenda Dickey*

We plan to have samples to view beforehand with Sign-up Sheets. If there are any Supply Fees, they will be noted on the Sign-up Sheets.

A Shopping/Lunch trip to Old Town Spring will be on Friday. So wear your walking shoes and bring your credit cards.

Other surprises are in the works.

Don't forget to be working on your Arts & Crafts contest entry...the clock is ticking. There is a category for whatever you wish to make. All types of medium are welcome.

Railroadiana
General
Theme: Houston Rodeo

Virginia Freitag-Non-Rail Chair

Secretary/Treasurer's Report

by Elbert Smith

LSR Financial Accounts:

For the period of October 1 through December 31, 2007:

Beginning Checking Account		$3,292.03
Vanguard Money Market Accts Total		$39,506.12
Funds Held For Div. 1 (Not LSR Funds)		$1,503.45
Total LSR Net Worth – All Accounts		$41,294.70
Income		
Ad, Dealer	40.00	
Ad, Pike	64.00	
Car & Decal Sales	843.54	
Convention 2007 Income	3,842.42	
Convention Seed Money Return	2,000.00	
Division 1 Income	99.00	
Vanguard MM (CD Fund)	360.76	
Vanguard MM (Convention Fund)	125.06	
Subtotal	$7,374.78	
Disbursements		
Division 1 Expense	50.89	
Marker Lamp Print & Mail	1,288.46	
Subtotal	$1,339.35	

Ending Checking Account	$9,327.46
Vanguard Money Market Accounts Total	$39,506.12
Funds Held For Div. 1 (Not LSR Funds)	$1,551.56
Total LSR Net Worth – All Accounts	$47,282.02

Total NMRA/LSR Membership inside the LSR area is 1059.

New Members – Please take note of the following members new to the NMRA/LSR. When you run into them, say hello, and invite them to attend your Division's activities.

Ben Lewis, The Colony TX
William Mattil, Haltom City, TX
Richard Ingle, Austin, TX
Michael Sinclair, Cedar Park, TX
Chris Grote, Corpus Christi, TX
Jerry Marek, San Antonio, TX
Barbara Shope, West Monroe, LA
Carroll McGuire, Cleveland, TX
Tom Scotty, Houston, TX
John Bryant, Cedar Park, TX
John Kullman, Midland, TX
Bobby Lancaster, Amarillo, TX
Dale Reed, San Antonio, TX
Richard Synder, Bandera, TX
Patti Bullard, Grapevine, TX
John Downing, Fort Worth, TX
Robert Koenigseder, Alvarado, TX
David Kranda, Keller, TX
Jonette Walker, Hineston, LA
Robert Walker, Hineston, LA

Cowcatcher Division 1

by Chris Atkins

I hope this issue finds you all well. At the time I write this, I just returned from Christmas break in the snowy north where I had a chance to visit my prototype, the Camas Prairie. This was exciting for a couple reasons. First, I haven't been in that part of the country during winter for over 10 years, and its a lot of fun to see trains battling the drifting snow. Second, a little more of this shortline disappears every time I visit. In just the last few months, two of the railroad's vintage pieces of equipment were sent to the scrapper with little notice: a rotary snow plow and a 40' PS-1 boxcar in original GN paint used for MOW tools. Both of these would have made fine additions to a museum, but arrangements take time and money and the price of scrap iron is high.

Back at home, the winter train show season is going strong. In November, the Cowcatcher Division did its part in promoting the hobby by participating in the Ft. Worth Holiday Train show. Thanks to all those that helped out. Currently, we are preparing for the upcoming January train show in Plano.

Last November, the group got together for a couple layout tours. Mike Ross and Mike Walters were kind enough to open their homes for to the division, and a small group of enthusiastic modelers visited their respective layouts. Both Mikes are O scalers, which made it especially appealing for those of us who want an occasional escape from the trappings of HO.

Now is a good time to turn in your nominations for the Cowcatcher Division youth scholarship. If you have a son, daughter, grandson, granddaughter, nephew, niece or neighbor kid that has some interest in model railroading, then send his name in with a short note explaining why they are deserving, and he/she can receive a scholarship for a year's NMRA membership. Also, if you have a youth in your club or maybe there's just a kid hanging around, send me their name. We have had this opportunity for several years now, but the response has been very lackluster.

The 2009 convention chair Jerry Hoverson had his first committee meeting. A convention hotel has been booked near the airport in Irving and plans are being made for what is shaping up to be an excellent convention. There are still committee chairs open. This would make a great time for you to volunteer.

The winter meeting will be held February 16th at 10AM in room one of the LMRA administration building - 3400 Bryant-Irvin Rd. I hope to do a clinic on making photographic mockup buildings using free software. For more information contact me at chris@railroadmodelers.com. I hope to see you all there.

Be sure to check out the new Division 1 website at http://cowcatcherdivision.com .

Bayou Division 2

by Jack Green

The "Holiday Seasons", which used to be called "Christmas and New Years" have come and gone, and now its time to get back to some serious railroading. I didn't get one thing related to trains this year because my family has discovered, through my pleading, that there is absolutely nothing that can be purchased that I don't already have, more or less. Belonging to a club with a lot of real estate and members available to do projects, keeps thoughts out of my mind, that to get something that would be nice to have rather than needing it for the layout.

Long time New Orleans model railroader Art Houston has retired, torn down his layout and moved to Houma where

he has grandchildren. I really think that he wanted a bigger layout room, imagine that, and convinced his wife being near the grandchildren so they could get involved was his primary concern. Art is planning a 20' by 30' plus building that will house his new empire. Art, along with New Orleans helper, Dave Abramson, has a rather large HO) modular layout that is often seen at shows over in Pensacola and Memphis. Part of the modular layout pictured.

Baton Rouge Model Railroad Club member Tom Johnson has completed his home layout (10x20) and is currently studying operation schemes. He estimates that 4 warm bodies can be entertained for hours on his highly detailed and sceniked pike. What really stands out is the lift section, shown in the picture, that he constructed using window shashes. I can state that it works to perfection and is sturdy enough to keep the tracks aligned in the Louisiana weather changes.

The Crescent City Model Railroad Club completed another season of fund raising shows ending December 16th. Like the summer show, the club purchased an ad to be placed in "Lagniappe" (a local newspaper section which caters to week-end entertainment). The two inch ad was under $80 and permitted the CCMRC to submit an illustration. A picture was taken of a Crescent Lines transfer caboose and looked great for approval, however when it was in the actual paper surrounded by other ads with defined graphics/illustrations our little transfer caboose looked like something else. That advertisement, as well as members making sure local hobby shops were stocked with flyers, resulted in shows with a better that average turnout.

The Midsouth, the Crescent City Model Railroad Club, Lou Schultz and Jim Lofland are gearing up for another Louisiana Rail Run in February. With so many other functions taking place in the fall, they decided that early in the new year offered the best chances for attendance. The Midsouth is honored to be chosen as a "stop-over" layout for the upcoming ProRail. Thanks for the support Gil and Don.

North East Texas Division 3

by Duane Richardson, MMR

Spring is coming and I hope the winter has been a safe and modeling productive one. As I type this report we are about to wrap up the train show season here with the Plano Train Show. We are beginning the planning for what to do with the 11th Annual Division 3 Meet for April. We are thinking about changing the format of the show some to see if we can draw some more interest. We have been declining in numbers the last few years and it is getting harder to pay for the location. What would you like to see? More layouts? More Clinics? Let me know and we'll see what we can do.

If you are like me, you are already planning for the Convention this June in Houston. The team there always puts on a great convention. This will be my third convention and it's always a blast. As usual there will be a ton of great clinics, lots of layouts to see and one of the best contest rooms around. The convention in 2009 will be back in our area and our first as a joint Division 1 & 3 effort. The first planning meetings have taken place but if you are interested in lending a hand please contact either myself or the convention chairman, Jerry Hoverson.

We are still holding our monthly meetings and look forward to seeing you (and a friend) there. We have had some really good clinics in recent months on carving foam scenery, train watching in the area and the steps involved in building an operating layout. Tom Browning and I both went over the planning of our respect layouts and how we came to the decisions we did. We have clinics coming up from one of our youngest members where he will go over the modifications he has made to some of his On30 projects. We are also looking to start a series of clinics similar to the scratchbuilding wooden structures series we held in 2006. This will be a hands-on class for all skill sets and will probably run across a couple of months this summer so plan to pack a toolbox.

What is Model Railroading 101? Glad you asked. We have a few members who are new to the hobby and there has been some interest in having some classes just for the beginners. We will be starting this at some point over the summer so let me know if you are interested and start making a list of questions to bring. This is a chance for you to learn the basics with others with similar skill sets as yours where you can ask those questions you didn't want to ask in front of the 'more experienced' members.

If you have a subject you would like to present to the group please volunteer to give a clinic. We are always looking for someone to present something new to the group.

I hope to see you all at the next meeting.

Cen-Tex Division 4

by Bob Alson, Jr.

As you have probably by now figured out if you have looked at the LSR ballot, I will officially be classified a "lame duck". I am going to be turning over the reins of the division to another very capable man. I will probably be having a

change in career soon and felt the division would be better off if I didn't resign mid-term. The ride has been a very enjoyable one and one that I think the division has benefited from.

When I was asked to take over an unexpired term over 7 years ago, I was reluctant. I can now say that the job isn't as scary as I imagined. My main goal of being a director was to get my area united and interacting. I also realized that as I was able to promote the hobby that would help in the area's cohesiveness. I think that division 4 is a much closer group of modelers than they were before I took over. I know that my work was only a foundation from which the next director will build upon. And I know he will continue to build a great structure.

One of the highlights of my time as director was in being chairman of the 2007 Hill Country Special convention. I couldn't have had a better group of guys and gals to work with. I thoroughly enjoyed getting to know these folks and working shoulder to shoulder with them. Without them, that convention wouldn't have been what it was- a big non-stop long weekend of train fun. Thanks for the memories!

Finally, my charge to all of my fellow members of division 4 is that you guys continue to get together and have fun as model railroaders. I want to come back from Africa in four years and see that there is a tighter group of division 4 modelers than when I left. Happy modeling!!!

Division 5

by Dave Lamberts

The children's course on model railroading at the Lubbock Science Spectrum was completed successfully. Attendance was smaller than expected (four kids with four parents) but we really did not market the project.

The course was divided into five sessions on successive Saturday mornings (two hours each) as follows :

Session One - Constructing the T-Trak module base.
Session Two - Building rolling stock and laying and ballasting the track.
Session Three - Building a structure.
Session Four - Scenery.
Session Five - Finish scenery and run trains.

The expenses for the course were about $200 which we shared with the Science Spectrum. A lot of the material we purchased can be used next year.

Every student was given a Certificate of Completion at the end of the course.

All-in-all, it was a successful adventure. We had a four-year-old as one student. That is too young as their attention span is measured in nanoseconds. Next year we probably will use eight as a minimum age.

I am going to try and get all the information regarding how to do this course together in a packet so that if others wish to attempt the course, the data will be available.

Division 6

by Fred Bock, MMR

Happy New Year!

Winter marks the season when train show events take place all throughout the Lone Star Region. Here in Division 6 (South Texas), the **Alamo Model Railroad Engineers (AMRE)** fall show is already past, having come to a successful conclusion in early October. The annual **San Antonio Model Railroad Association (SAMRA)** train show is scheduled to take place in Live Oak, Texas in the Live Oak Civic Center the last weekend in January. And in mid-April, the **New Braunfels Railroad Historical and Modelers' Society (NBRHMS)** will hold it's annual Spring train show in New Braunfels. An added feature of the NBRHMS show this Spring will be a Texas-wide N-scale T-Track meet, with modelers bringing their T-Track modules from all parts of Texas to assemble into the largest T-Track layout ever built in Texas. Refer to the "Up the Track" column elsewhere in this issue of the "Marker Lamp" for further details.

In December, SAMRA sponsored a Railroading Merit Badge Clinic for Boy Scouts in the Alamo Area Council, BSA seeking to earn that badge. The event was organized and spearheaded by **Pat Mackin**. SAMRA has developed it's own slate of BSA-approved Railroading Merit Badge Councilors, and the clinic is put on with small groups of Scouts rotating among stations covering the various requirements for the Badge. Another RR MB Clinic is scheduled for late January.

The **Texas Transportation Museum (TTM)** in San Antonio held it's annual **"Santa's Railroad Wonderland"** holiday event the 3 weekends prior to Christmas. The event was held in the evening, 6-9 pm, and featured thousands of lights strung all over the Museum grounds, including upon buildings, locomotives and rolling stock. The event included operating railroads in **five** (5) different scales! The **Alamo Model Railroad Engineers (AMRE)** had their HO layout operating for the public, and the **San Antonio Garden Railway Engineers Society (SAGRES)** kept their garden railway operating in temperatures which did a fair simulation of Colorado Narrow Gauge in winter! The TTM **Longhorn and Western** 1:1 scale railroad gave rides up and down their line, and the **O-scale tinplate** layout fascinated kids of all ages. Other features included hot cocoa and coffee (a necessity in the frigid temperatures), the **United States Marine Corps** "Toys for Tots" program, **San Antonio Bagpipers**, ragtimepiano music – live — provided by the **San Antonio Ragtime Association**, hayrides, and rides in the Museum's antique Model A truck, beautifully restored.

One of the special features of this years TTM "Wonderland" event was the participation of the **San Antonio N-trak Association (SANTRAK)**. SANTRAK set-up a T-track layout in the Zucht Display Building adjacent to the HO and O-tinplate layouts and had it staffed and in operation during all 8 evenings. TTM was delighted by their participation; Executive Director **Hugh Hemphill** described them as "some of the nicest people I've had the pleasure to work with". As of this writing, SANTRAK has kept their T-track layout set-up at TTM for their members to operate upon, and TTM is looking for way to expand the space available to them for T-trak and/or N-trak modular layouts.

Two layouts within Division 6 were featured in the latest issue of Kalmbach's "Great Model Railroads" annual. **Sharon and Joe Mainz** had their beautifully done **Southern Pacific (Flatonia Junction)** HO layout showcased – recognition long overdue and well-deserved. (Their layout will be featured on the layout tour during the SAMRA show in January). And nationally-known Sn3 modeler **Steve Amitrano** had his detailed, portable (!) **D&RGW "Chili Line"** described. Steve's layout is unique for layouts with this level of detail and craftsmanship - - - because it is designed to be dismantled and moved every couple of years. Steve began building the "Chili Line" while serving in the U.S. Air Force, and it has survived a number of military moves from assignment to assignment. Now that Steve has retired, the "Chili Line" has found a permanent home in San Antonio.

That's about it for this issue. More news - next time, Until then, if there's news of your club or personal layout, please let me know so we can share it around the Division. . . and remember: ***"Don't Just Belong . . . Participate!"***

Division 7

by Don Kimmell

Greetings from North Louisiana and East Texas. I hope everyone had a joyous and fun Christmas! And received all sorts of train stuff! You never have too much.

Let us not forget the Longview/JETTS Annual Train Show, Last weekend in February at the Longview Fair Grounds, I know Homer is planning another good one!

Also, let us welcome a couple of new members to the Div 7 family, Jonette and Robert Walker of Hineston, LA. I hope to meet them in the near future.

Now to upcoming events, on April 26th and 27th, the Tyler Tap Chapter, Cotton Belt Historical Society will be having their annual Show at the Tyler Convention Center. Last year was the first time back to a "spring" show and it was fun! There are no other "local" shows that weekend, and they usually have a good selection of Vendors, so come on out and see what is going on.

Now, covering the past events, the Marshal Texas T&P Station show was another fun event, they were in completion with a "big" Houston show, so the Vendors were down, but a good time was had by all, and they did raise some much needed funds for their ongoing Station Projects, so if you are a planner, mark the first weekend of November 08' to attend a fun show, plus they are getting some nice "goodies" for down at the Station, the "real stuff".

The Northwest Louisiana Train Show was also a success, this year, they had it at the National Guard Armory, so space was down a bit, but the vendors did seem to do well, and Charles G. did a super workshop—with paper and PowerPoint! He actually did a couple of buildings that he is going to use on his home layout!!

The Ark-La-Tex crew did the "usual" two weeks at the Shriners' Hospital here in Shreveport for Christmas. If you could see the joy that these trains bring to the kids, unbelievable! I only managed to be there a couple of days; you know work and Elf stuff. But the reaction to the modules and trains is awesome! If you or I were in the conditions of some of those children, I don't think one could smile, but they do. It makes "playing" trains very worth while! (possible reason to give your other half to explain all those new trains!—it is for the kids!!).

That is about it from around here, I do look forward to this year's convention, those Houston folks do put on a Great Convention, hope to see you there.

Texas Gulf Division 8

by Ray Byer

I hope the holidays were good to you last year. Division 8 has made some great plans for this year. We have in the works "Modeling with your Division 8 MMR's ", this is a hands on clinic in Feb 23, 2008. Next we have on March 1, 2008 "Division 8 Operations day"; this is a great way to learn the operations side of the hobby. Finally we have on March 8, 2008, a trip to the Southern Forest Heritage Museum; a special tour has been arranged for Division 8 members.

We have more in the works for the rest of the year, so check your Waybill and website for more plans for the year. If you would like more information on this great plans you can e-mail me at raybyer@yahoo.com and I will get you the information you need.

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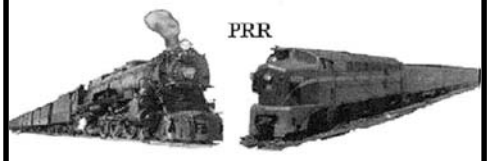
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